United Nations S/PV.7205

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7205th meeting

Tuesday, 24 June 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin/Mr. Pankin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-43906 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Šimonović, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Zagreb.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on recent developments in Ukraine.

Due in large part to the initiative taken by President Petro Poroshenko since his inauguration on 7 June to find a peaceful, lasting resolution to the crisis in Ukraine and to the unrelenting efforts of the international community, there are encouraging signs towards a de-escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, and political and diplomatic steps are beginning to be taken towards the resolution of the crisis.

On 20 June, Ambassador Yuriy Sergeyev of Ukraine provided the Secretary-General with an official copy of President Poroshenko's peace plan, which included de-escalatory measures such as amnesty for those who did not participate in serious crimes, disarmament, the decentralization of power and early local and parliamentary elections, and a programme for creating jobs in the region.

Simultaneously, upon the advice of his military commanders informing him that the border with the Russian Federation had been secured, on 20 June President Poroshenko announced the start of a one-week unilateral ceasefire aimed at giving armed militia a window of opportunity to disarm. Government forces were ordered to withdraw from their engagements, allowing rebels a chance to lay down their weapons. According to the plan, all rebels who surrender peacefully and who have not committed grave crimes would be granted amnesty. Also, with a view to engaging with Ukraine's eastern regions, the President travelled on 19 June to the Donbass region, where he met with civil society, business and community leaders. The following day, he travelled to conflict areas in Donetsk and Lugansk.

On 21 June, the Secretary-General spoke to President Poroshenko over the phone, expressing his encouragement over the peace plan and in particular the start of a unilateral ceasefire. At the same time, the Secretary-General voiced concern that it might be difficult to halt the violence without the engagement of the armed groups. The Secretary-General has since been pleased to see that peace talks have reportedly started with representatives of the armed groups in eastern Ukraine, led by former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and with the participation of the Russian ambassador to Ukraine and European officials. The Secretary-General has stressed that such talks are indispensable to efforts to help defuse tensions.

The Secretary-General has also taken note of the fact that the armed militia groups have agreed to reciprocate the ceasefire, despite previously rejecting the President's offer and continuing their offensive. Overall, the ceasefire is holding. The Secretary-General expects all sides to live up to the ceasefire and to leave the door open for effective negotiation and mediation towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Today, according to reports, in a welcome development that will not only help reduce tensions but also improve the chances for a negotiated settlement, President Putin asked the Russian Parliament to revoke the authorization given to him to send troops to Ukraine. President Poroshenko's office welcomed the move as the first practical step after President Putin expressed support for the peace plan. While those are important steps with the potential to de-escalate the situation, the Secretary-General remains deeply concerned that the realities on the ground are still grave and deeply worrying.

Until those recent political developments, fierce fighting, particularly in eastern Ukraine, had raged on, claiming hundreds of lives and injuring many more, including civilians. Arms, weapons and fighters had crossed Ukraine's border, making the situation more complex and more violent. Various rebel groups had sprung up, uncoordinated, and are reportedly not fighting for any apparent political cause.

Even after President Poroshenko's announced ceasefire, the armed groups had publicly rejected the offer and continued their assault on Ukrainian forces on the night of 20-21 June, reportedly injuring six servicemen. During that same period, other reports indicate that Ukrainian forces also continued their security operations, although it was unclear if they were merely defending themselves against attacks. The Russian Federation has reported that shells from those exchanges had crossed its border, causing material damage.

On 14 June, a Ukrainian Ilyushin-76 military transport aeroplane was shot down while approaching an airport in Luhansk. The aeroplane was targeted by armed militia on its approach to the Luhansk airport and crashed at 12.50 a.m. local time. All 49 people on board, including 40 paratroopers, were killed.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitors abducted almost a month ago on 26 and 29 May are still being held captive. The Secretary-General has reiterated his call for their immediate and unconditional release.

The fighting has resulted in loss of lives and caused much suffering to innocent people. It is for the sake of those innocent people that efforts must be made to urgently capitalize on the progress that has been made in the political and diplomatic areas.

The Secretary-General has been stressing all along that the international community cannot afford to fail Ukraine and its people. He has reiterated the pressing need for the international community to work together to stop the hostilities and help achieve lasting peace. President Poroshenko's peace plan has received support from key parties in the country, the region and beyond. However, there is still more hard work to be done. The international community needs to support Ukraine in surmounting the current crisis and finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the challenges facing the country. The United Nations stands ready to support all efforts to that end.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Šimonović.

Mr. Šimonović: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation of human rights in Ukraine. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has just issued the third monthly report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. The report covers the period from 7 May to 7 June. In this briefing, I will also provide some updates since the report's 7 June cut-off date.

The report outlines some positive developments that have occurred over the period through a number of initiatives and legislative changes. They include legislative amendments to combat discrimination and corruption. There have also been legislative developments relating to amnesty, the lustration of judges, language rights, ethnic policy, torture and ill-treatment, the media and the reform of law enforcement agencies. These are important pieces of legislation that will go a long way towards ensuring that proper legal safeguards are put in place to address some of the root causes of the crisis.

The Government has also taken steps towards the implementation of the Geneva statement of 17 April through the organization of round tables on national unity. The outcome of these round tables contributed to Parliament's adoption on 20 May of a resolution entitled "Memorandum of concord and peace". The memorandum foresees the adoption of a constitutional reform package that includes the decentralization of power, special status for the Russian language, judicial and police reform, and an amnesty law for anti-Government protesters in the east who would agree to give up weapons, excluding those who have committed serious crimes against life and physical integrity. This is a welcome development.

The report notes that the presidential election took place on 25 May, with relatively few human rights violations in most of the country. However, serious human rights violations took place in that context in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, where attacks on election commissions and commissioners occurred throughout the pre-electoral period and during the election, disrupting the holding of elections and depriving a large proportion of residents of their right to vote.

Progress in the ongoing accountability processes for the Maidan violence, as well as for the 2 May incidents in Odesa, remains slow. Some arrests of Berkut forces have taken place, but there have been no prosecutions so far in the case of the 113 persons killed during the Maidan events between November 2013 and February 2014.

With regard to the tragic events of 2 May in Odesa, no fewer than six investigations have been launched. Our report so far points towards grave inaction, and concerns with the conduct of the police and the fire brigade in taking the necessary measures to prevent the incidents and ensuing casualties. The proliferation of investigations carries a high risk of miscommunication and consequent contamination of evidence. The lack of transparency in the investigations is also of concern. It will be crucial for these investigations to be carried out thoroughly, promptly and impartially.

I shall now turn to the east of the country, where we are seeing the most serious human rights challenges.

The report highlights the rapidly deteriorating situation in the east. However, the situation has deteriorated even further, since the cut-off date of the report. Estimates based on information gathered from official sources indicate that from 15 April to 20 June, 423 people, including servicemen and civilians, were killed. There has been an increase in arms and recruitment for armed groups. Representative of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic have recognized the presence within their ranks of armed groups of citizens of the Russian Federation, including from Chechnya and other republics of the North Caucasus.

Abductions and detentions by armed groups remain a worrying trend. The lawlessness continues to spread. Human rights abuses by the armed groups are increasing and common criminality is rising. The monitors have recorded 222 cases of abduction and detention by armed groups since 13 April. Of these, as of 7 June, 4 had been killed, 81 remained in detention and 137 had been released.

In the context of the Government's security operations, there has been an increase in reports of enforced disappearances and of excessive use of force that have led to casualties among the population. Despite security constraints, we continue to monitor these incidents and to raise them with the Government. While we have not received reports of the deliberate targeting of the population, we are verifying allegations that security forces could have taken measures to prevent civilian casualties. The Government must ensure that its armed forces refrain from using excessive force and that its security operations are at all times in line with relevant international human rights standards.

The population is leaving, partly due to fear, but also because of the worsening situation of economic and social rights. Over the past two weeks, the population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has doubled in the country, with a large movement of people — estimated at some 15,200 — within the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As of 23 June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had profiled more than 46,100 IDPs, 11,500 from Crimea and nearly 34,600 from the east. In the absence of a formal registration system, and given the limited access to some areas by humanitarian partners, the number of IDPs is likely to be higher.

The Government has been encouraged to respond to the humanitarian needs of IDPs, including by establishing a comprehensive registration system, formulating legislative and regulatory acts to ease access to important social and economic rights, and establishing public assistance programmes. The mobilization and coordination of civil society-initiated relief efforts, and cooperation with international donors and technical assistance, are also crucial.

The report indicates that in May, studies had to be suspended in several towns in the east, affecting 21,700 pupils. Hospitals remain overcrowded and understaffed, medical supplies are low, and the Ministry of Health reports that up to 10 hospitals in the eastern regions are now closed. Food prices have skyrocketed. Seasonal vegetables are now on average four to fivetimes more expensive than before. Meanwhile, it is becoming increasingly difficult for businesses to operate and people to go to work. There have been, for instance, armed attacks on mining companies, which constitute the main share of the region's economy.

About half of the population of the Donetsk region is experiencing some problems with access to water. Since last week, in Slovyansk there has been no running water. Around 90 per cent of the town is now cut off from electricity. Phones do not work most of the time and public transport does not function.

The situation of journalists is also alarming. The Council rightly condemned the recent killing of two

Russian journalists by mortar fire, which followed the killing of an Italian photojournalist and his Russian interpreter on 24 May. While the perpetrators of those recent attacks are yet to be identified, it will be highly important to ensure accountability.

The report describes the situation in Crimea as a legal limbo. Although Ukrainian legislation is supposed to remain in force, also in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262, legal institutions in Crimea are already being required to comply with the provisions of legislation of the Russian Federation. That has very practical effects, as some 15,000 judicial cases remain in legal limbo between Ukrainian and Russian laws and legal systems.

The Crimean Tatar population has been facing some concerning limitations on their enjoyment of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association and religion.

The United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine has so far been playing an important role in defusing tensions through its impartial reporting on the human rights situation. It can play an equally useful role through human rights and humanitarian confidence-building measures. The mission has already facilitated numerous releases of individuals detained by the armed groups. However, such measures should be based on reciprocity, and individuals that are arbitrarily detained by the authorities must also be released if there is no well-founded legal basis for them to remain in detention. As the mission has contacts on all sides, it will continue to support and facilitate such initiatives.

President Poroshenko's recently announced peace plan and unilateral ceasefire is a positive step in the right direction. It is also encouraging to learn of yesterday's announcement by the armed groups that they would observe a ceasefire until Friday. That creates a window of opportunity for human rights and humanitarian confidence-building measures.

Beyond the immediate crisis response, respect for all the human rights of everyone living in Ukraine is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. The United Nations human rights monitoring mission stands ready to support the Government of Ukraine, as well as civil society and various national and social groups, to make that happen.

With your permisison, Mr. President, I will now disconnect from the video teleconference. Because of an unforseen change in my flight schedule, I will need to depart now to catch a flight to Bujumbura.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Šimonović for his briefing. Mr. Šimonović has asked for my leave to depart. I cannot deny it, as he has given his briefing to the Security Council. Given that he has an urgent reason, we will indeed grant that leave. I would be grateful if one of his assistants could listen in to our discussion.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Time and again — at least 17 times since February — we have gathered here to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And time and again, we have had to dedicate significant amounts of time to reviewing the efforts of Russia to destabilize its neighbour and to refuting the bald misinformation and outright fiction about what is happening on the ground in Ukraine.

Russian rhetoric has been inaccurate, inflammatory and self-justifying. On 17 June, just last week, Foreign Minister Lavrov accused Ukrainian military authorities of carrying out ethnic cleaning. Days earlier, a leader in the Duma accused Ukraine of committing mass genocide. My Government, the Security Council and the United Nations take extremely seriously any reports of ethnic cleaning or genocide. But baseless claims like those have the effect of radicalizing Russian separatists, escalating this horrible crisis and further eviscerating the credibility of Russian reports from the region.

We should consider such claims alongside the facts on the ground, such as the situation of the ethnic Tatar community in Crimea following Russia's purported annexation, which the international community will never recognize. The homes of Tatar leaders have been arbitrarily searched and editors of their main newspaper have been threatened with prosecution. Tatars who have participated in peaceful protests have been locked up by the dozens, and many more insulted and harassed for speaking their language in public. And its members have been told that they and all Crimeans must give up their Ukrainian citizenship or else be treated like foreigners in their own land.

Meanwhile, in areas controlled by illegal separatist groups in south-east Ukraine, we continue to see Russia's extensive support for the campaign of violence and separatist terror. The crimes committed by those

groups are methodically documented in the United Nations monitoring mission's reports and follow a pattern set by Russia's unlawful intervention in Crimea. They include the violent seizure and occupation of public and Government buildings, unprovoked lethal attacks against Ukrainian security forces and arbitrary arrests, torture, beatings, death threats, disappearances, killings and other serious abuses carried out by Russian fighters and the pro-Russian separatists.

We do not need to look very far or hard to find evidence of that campaign. We see it in the three T-64 Russian tanks that suddenly showed up in the hands of separatists in eastern Ukraine. We see it in the burned out BM-21 rocket launcher, one of many that suddenly appeared in eastern Ukraine in the past weeks, which photographs show recently belonged to Russia's eighteenth motorized rifle brigade, based in Chechnya. We see it in surface-to-air missiles that were recently seized by Ukrainian forces after a clash with separatists; they were still accompanied by their official paperwork, revealing that as recently as two months ago those missiles were held on a Russian air-defence base in the Krasnodar region. Those are just the type of surface-to-air missiles, I would note, that were used to bring down a Ukrainian military transport plane last week, killing all 49 people on board. And we see it in the alarming redeployment of thousands of Russian troops and military hardware along the border with Ukraine, at the closest proximity since the invasion of Crimea in February.

Russia has attempted — erroneously — to characterize the events unfolding in eastern Ukraine as a humanitarian crisis. They falsely have cast themselves as the defender of rights and vindicator of the vulnerable, and the Russian army and its operatives as a humanitarian aid agency. But this Russian aid operation sends soldiers, not doctors. It mans armoured personnel carriers, not relief tents. It provides surface-to-air missiles, not meals ready-to-eat.

Russia claims that 100,000 people have fled Ukraine for Russia. Yet Under-Secretary-General Amos informed the Council in a briefing last week that the real number was around 4,600. I do not for one moment intend to minimize the very real humanitarian consequences of the crises in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, including the tens of thousands of internally displaced people within Ukraine's borders. But we have to be objective and fact-based in our claims, and candid about what has brought about these dire humanitarian consequences, namely, the political and military support that Russia continues to provide to armed violent separatists.

Yet, remarkably, even in the face of separatist attacks and inflammatory propaganda, the Ukrainian Government and Ukrainian people have shown in word and in deed a sustained willingness to work towards a peaceful solution. The Ukrainian people elected a leader, Petro Poroshenko, who campaigned on creating a democratic, unified and peaceful Ukraine. Since taking office, President Poroshenko has persistently sought to achieve that goal through dialogue and reconciliation, even in the face of provocations and violence. He proposed, and then implemented, a unilateral ceasefire to allow separatists to lay down their arms. He offered to create a safe passage for Russian fighters to return to their country. And he proposed amnesty to Russian-backed separatists who had not committed serious crimes.

We welcome yesterday's reports that representatives of the Ukrainian and Russian Governments and separatists groups met together, leading to an announcement by some separatist leaders that they would respect the ceasefire. President Poroshenko and his Government have taken steps to decentralize power, increase transparency, combat corruption and protect the rights of minorities. And he has put on the table a comprehensive and just peace plan. In sum, he and the Ukrainian people have done everything that could be expected, in an effort to make peace in accordance with international law and norms.

Over the last few days, we have seen more contradictory behaviour on the part of Russia. On the one hand, President Putin expresses his support for President Poroshenko's ceasefire and his intention to work towards a peaceful settlement. That is a welcome development. Yet, on the other hand, Russia has recently returned a significant number of its troops to the border and has ramped up the flow of weapons and materiel to separatists, an increasing number of whom are Russian citizens with no personal connection to eastern Ukraine.

President Putin has also placed Russian troops on combat alert and launched a new surprise military exercise. President Putin's recent statements are welcome. But it is hard to take a little rhetoric of reconciliation seriously when it is accompanied by actions that are clearly aimed at stoking tension. It is even harder to take seriously given that Russia's

track record of repeatedly breaking its commitments to dialogue and to peace, as it did after the Geneva statement in April and after the pledges that President Putin made to President Obama in Normandy earlier this month. While we welcome the more conciliatory rhetoric from President Putin in recent days, those words now need to be reflected in a genuine shift in the facts on the ground. Those facts are best gathered by unbiased reporting, like that conducted by international monitoring missions. But the Russians and the armed separatists that they support do not seem comfortable with facts or with monitors.

As we sit here, eight monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are being held captive for the crime of bearing witness and gathering facts, actions that are dangerous only to those who would distort those facts. The monitors have been held captive for nearly a month — a month — by separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk, with no justification. For these crimes there must be consequences. There also must be continued consequences for Russia's consistent violations of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and for its ongoing failure to meet the commitments it has made. And there must be consequences for the widespread crimes and abuses committed by the armed separatists Russia supports — both because the victims of those crimes merit justice and because, as we have seen, unless Russia feels effective pressure to de-escalate, it will continue to choose to escalate the crisis.

We have urged Russia to be part of the political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. But, if it persists with the same escalatory tactics, it must face additional costs.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zerihoun and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović for the briefings that we have just heard and for the detailed and thorough work being undertaken by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

Let me start with the positive. The United Kingdom strongly supports the peace plan set out by President Poroshenko on 20 June. That plan builds on earlier steps taken by the Government of Ukraine to implement the Geneva statement of 17 April. They include holding three rounds of national dialogue and submitting a draft law on amnesty for those who hand over illegal arms and who vacate illegally occupied buildings. The Government of Ukraine has also initiated constitutional reform and decentralization and has guaranteed protection and a special status for the Russian language. The peace plan constitutes a genuine and far-reaching set of proposals, which now create a major opportunity for de-escalation. Now is the moment for others to reciprocate.

We welcome the fact that President Poroshenko's peace plan has received at least a measure of support from Russia. President Putin has described the declaration of a ceasefire as without question an important step towards reaching a settlement and has said that Russia will certainly support those plans. We also note reports from Moscow that President Putin has asked the Russian Parliament to revoke the right of military intervention in Ukraine. Although we emphatically reject any suggestion that the decision by the Russian Parliament would confer any legitimacy on Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, it would send a positive signal that needs to be reinforced by positive actions.

Russia must now back up those statements with actions to tackle instability in southern and eastern Ukraine. Those actions must include the following: first, adopting effective measures to prevent the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and equipment from Russia into Ukraine; secondly, applying its influence over separatist groups to ensure that they renounce violence, lay down their arms and commit themselves to addressing their grievances through the peaceful and democratic mechanisms that are available to them; and, thirdly, continuing the withdrawal of troops from near the Ukrainian border.

Russia has created facts on the ground through its direct support for armed separatist groups. It must now reverse the dynamics it has created, by preventing the flow of arms and fighters into Ukraine and using its influence over armed separatist groups so that they stop their illegal activities. If that does not happen, the countries of the European Union, including at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting yesterday, have reiterated their readiness to take further measures against Russia.

I now come to the latest human rights monitoring report. The Ukrainian Government has engaged constructively with the mission, highlighting its commitment to transparency and to upholding the human rights of its citizens. It is disappointing that, once again, Russian Government sources have criticized the report and impugned the professionalism

and integrity of the monitors and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a whole. We encourage the Government of Ukraine to address concerns raised in the mission's report of a lack of cooperation among the six different investigations into the tragic events of 2 May in Odessa, what Mr. Šimonović called "grave inaction" just now. We also urge the Government to ensure the security of all diplomatic missions. We condemn unreservedly the attack against the Russian Embassy in Kyiv on 14 June. Establishing confidence in the rule of law in Ukraine is essential. The United Kingdom, together with our partners, is ready to support the Ukrainian Government as they tackle reforms in those areas.

The mission's latest report highlights the role played by illegal armed groups in Donetsk and Luhansk in preventing many voters in those regions from participating in the presidential elections of 25 May. The separatist tactics of threatening, beating and abducting staff of the Electoral Commission, destroying voter lists and ballot boxes and seizing control of polling stations demonstrate a contempt for democracy and a determination to prevent the people of those regions from having a voice in the future of Ukraine.

As the latest report underlines, the actions of illegal armed groups have led to a deterioration in the human rights situation in Donetsk and Luhansk. Having violently seized control, those groups are failing to provide public services and are damaging vital infrastructure. We are deeply disturbed by the mission's findings of abductions, detentions, ill treatment, torture, looting and killings being carried out by those groups against the broader civilian population.

The monitoring mission has reported 222 cases of abductions and detentions by illegal armed groups. They have also recorded numerous allegations of ill treatment and torture, starvation of prisoners, beatings, electric shocks and even amputation, which are all reportedly being used by pro-Russian groups. It is no surprise that the mission's report concludes that areas under separatist control are characterized by an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

The monitoring mission's report cites compelling evidence of the use of propaganda and misinformation to generate a climate of fear and instability in Ukraine. That includes the use by the Russian media of doctored photographs and re-purposed film footage. The report notes, for example, the footage used to substantiate claims that Ukraine was using United Nations marked helicopters, a claim also made in the Chamber by the Russian Federation, was in fact filmed in other countries at an earlier date. For example, a photograph of such a helicopter presented by Russia as evidence to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was in fact taken in 2011 in Côte d'Ivoire. There are numerous other examples of misinformation, including footage claiming to show incendiary weapons being used by the Ukrainian military, which was in fact filmed in November 2004 in Iraq. On one occasion recently, the Russian Permanent Representative urged us all to follow the Russian media for an accurate picture of what is going on in Ukraine. On the evidence of this report, I think that most of us would beg to differ with that.

The mission's latest report also confirms that in Crimea the introduction of Russian legislation is undermining Ukrainian citizens' enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Pro-Ukrainians are being targeted and intimidated with increasing discrimination, especially in the areas of education and employment. We underline that the United Kingdom will not recognize or accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

Over a succession of Council meetings, we have seen a deterioration of the security situation in parts of Ukraine caused by illegal armed separatist groups. We have seen growing evidence of human rights abuses, in large part because of the actions of those armed groups, and we have witnessed a growing humanitarian challenge. The peace plan put forward by President Poroshenko provides an opportunity to break out of that downward spiral. Yesterday's OSCE-brokered talks in Donetsk seem to have given positive momentum to that. The United Kingdom urges the Council to give strong and united support to that plan. It urges the Ukrainian Government to press forward purposefully with its implementation, and it urges the Russian Federation to follow up on its positive statements with positive actions that will cut off political and practical support to armed separatist groups and allow a process of dialogue and democratic engagement to take root.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, wish to thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing and Mr. Šimonović for introducing the third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. I understand that the Ukrainian authorities have accepted the renewal of the mission's mandate for the next three months. We welcome that. The mission is

an invaluable source of information in terms of giving an overview of the situation in Ukraine.

The report submitted by Mr. Šimonović covers an important event in the history of the country — the election of Petro Poroshenko as the new President of Ukraine. Despite the obstacles placed before the people of the east in the exercise of their right to free expression, voting proceeded normally in the rest of Ukraine. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has stressed, international norms were respected. Mr. Poroshenko is therefore the new legitimate President of Ukraine and has been recognized as such. His talks in Normandy during the ceremonies to commemorate the 6 June 1944 landing, as well as his inaugural ceremony, are evidence of that. This is an important stage because the election has given birth to a process of political normalization.

Mr. Šimonović's third report sheds light on the important steps taken by the Government of Ukraine, particularly in the context of implementing the Geneva statement of 17 April. Round tables were organized to bring diverse sectors of Ukrainian society together, and a draft law entitled "Memorandum of concord and peace", which provides for the decentralization of power and guarantees on the status of the Russian language, has been adopted by the Rada.

The report also notes that investigations are under way into the serious human rights violations committed during the events of Maidan Square, as well as those that took place in 2 May in Odesa. While there has not yet been a full clarification of those tragic events, it should nonetheless be stressed that efforts have been made to that end. The cooperation of Ukraine with the United Nations human rights monitoring mission on this issue has also been significant. Those elements show that, despite the many difficulties that have arisen, Ukraine is in the process of achieving its political transition.

Despite such positive developments, eastern Ukraine, including Donetsk and Luhansk, has experienced a general deterioration in its security, human rights and humanitarian situation under the sway of illegal separatist armed groups. The third report stresses that arbitrary arrests, kidnapping, torture and murder now affect not only journalists, public officials and human rights activists, but the population as a whole. Mr. Šimonović has just informed us that the situation has grown even worse over the past week. In that regard, I remind the Council that eight OSCE observers have been held by separatists since late May, which poses an unacceptable obstacle to that Organization's mission.

The violence, as has already been confirmed, is fueled and sustained from outside. The presence of those foreign elements and all foreign support for them must cease. Control of transborder movements is critical. In such conditions, the Government of Ukraine is responsible for taking appropriate and proportional measures, with respect for international law, to combat the armed groups, protect the populace and ensure control of its own borders.

Those operations impact the population's access to basic services. Some residents have been forced to flee areas of confrontation and take refuge in other regions of Ukraine or in the Russian Federation. No one can deny that humanitarian needs exist. That is why humanitarian actors on the ground are already mobilized to respond. Coordinating all these responses not only among the various agencies but also with the Ukrainian authorities is essential. Indeed, the Ukrainian Government has taken all necessary steps to provide shelter to those who have been forced from their homes. I note that all regions of Ukraine, east and west alike, have responded to the call for solidarity. The sense of unity and of sharing a common destiny clearly exists in Ukraine.

As the mission report points out, the imposition of Russian law in Crimea, which was illegitimately annexed by Russia, has created a situation of judicial instability that prevents the local population from exercising its human rights and basic freedoms. Discrimination in hiring is rampant. Leaders and human rights activists of the Tatar community are being prosecuted. It is increasingly difficult to keep two nationalities, and those who refuse to inform the Russian authorities are now subject to criminal charges. The human rights of these people have been trampled.

Faced with the serious crisis in Ukraine, the authorities in Kyiv have made a number of good-will gestures. We welcome President Poroshenko's decision to propose a 15-point peace plan and to declare a week-long ceasefire. We note with satisfaction that his proposed truce was accepted yesterday by the armed groups in the context of the three-way meetings held among Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE following the meetings in Normandy. We encourage that dialogue to continue and we call on the armed groups in eastern Ukraine to lay down their arms, leave all illegally occupied public buildings, and engage honestly and

openly in a political dialogue that will allow them to make their claims in a legal and peaceful manner.

In such conditions, everything possible must be done to promote a return to calm, which is a sine qua non for the start of a political dialogue. That, I repeat, entails control of the Russian-Ukrainian border in order to halt the infiltration of equipment and armed men. The international community as a whole and all members of the Council must strive towards that end and support Kyiv's efforts. We welcome the declaration of the ceasefire enjoys the support of the Russian President. That support must be reflected on the ground at a time when there is cause for concern over word that wide-scale new military exercises are under way. In that light, we are heartened by the Russian President's call on the Russian Federation Council this morning to annul its authorization for the Russian Army to intervene on Ukrainian territory.

Today, there is no other path for Ukraine except that of unity and reconciliation. The European Union and France stand ready to offer Ukraine all their support in those efforts, as our Heads of State and Government recalled at their summit on 27 May.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank the briefers for their updates on political developments and the human rights situation in Ukraine. On political developments, we are pleased to note that, after months of conflict and escalating tensions, the people of Ukraine now have an opportunity to peacefully resolve the crisis that has destabilized their country.

We have carefully studied Petro Poroshenko's 15-point peace plan. We see it as the best way forward in the current circumstances to address the various issues that led to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We urge the people of Ukraine and the international community to support the plan. Of particular significance in the plan are the week-long ceasefire, steps to decentralize power, the protection of the Russian language and constitutional reform.

We welcome the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the ceasefire. We believe that it has played a role in the decision of the pro-Russian separatists to respect the ceasefire. We see it as a positive development that raises hopes for an end to the fighting that has caused substantial damage to property, left hundreds dead or wounded, displaced hundreds of thousands of people and disrupted livelihoods. We are pleased to note that the ceasefire is holding, as the Government has announced that there has been no fighting in eastern Ukraine since yesterday.

We take positive note of the promise of the rebels to release the observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) who have been held hostage since May. That is a significant development. According to news reports, a representative of the rebels at the negotiations held yesterday in Donetsk, in line with President Poroshenko's peace plan, stated that the release of the OSCE observers would "be one of the steps that will improve mutual understanding on both sides". We would like to see the OSCE observers released unconditionally and without delay.

All things considered, the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian crisis have been enhanced. We hope that the people of Ukraine will build on the momentum and goodwill generated by President Poroshenko's peace plan. We have consistently advocated dialogue as the way to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, and we are pleased to see that happening now.

On human rights, we have carefully examined the third report of the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, which covers the period of 7 May to 7 June. We note that the reporting period precedes the peace plan of President Poroshenko. The report links the deterioration of the human rights situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. We condemn all violations of human rights, including abductions, torture, forced disappearances and illegal detentions. We would like to see the perpetrators brought to justice in order to send a strong message that impunity will not be tolerated. It is our hope that with the current ceasefire and eventual cessation of hostilities the human rights situation in eastern Ukraine will begin to improve.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the need for all concerned to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, thank Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, for their briefings.

Luxembourg welcomes the resolute action taken by the democratically elected President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, to restore peace and stability in eastern Ukraine. We welcome his decision to take a first

essential step towards de-escalation by announcing the comprehensive 15-point peace plan and by establishing a unilateral ceasefire to allow the peace plan to be implemented. That decision has already had a positive effect, since last night it led to a separatist leader of the Donetsk region responding to the presidential initiative by committing, for his part, to observing a ceasefire until next Friday. We welcome the constructive role played by the current chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in that regard.

Russia has a key role to play in achieving a sustainable de-escalation of the situation. We call on that country to use all its influence with the separatists so that they stop the violence, lay down their arms once and for all and release the OSCE observers. We also call on Russia to take effective steps to stop the continuous flow of weapons and fighters to Ukraine and thereby to establish conditions conducive to the implementation of the peace plan announced on Friday by President Poroshenko.

A political solution is crucial to improving the living conditions of the Ukrainians in the areas controlled by separatist armed groups in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Luxembourg shares the concern of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights over the collapse of public order and respect for the rule of law in those areas. We are very concerned about the increasing number of abductions, detentions, cases of torture and killings by the separatists. The crimes and human rights abuses no longer target only local politicians, activists and independent journalists but also now affect the population of those regions in general.

The combined effect of the presence of armed groups committing illegal acts and the increased exchange of fire between separatists and the Ukrainian armed forces has had a negative impact on the human rights of the people living in areas that are under the control of separatists. The public services are severely disrupted. We are also concerned about the number of internally displaced people, which continues to increase.

The situation in Crimea is of concern, as well. The monthly reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights show that the human rights situation has severely deteriorated since the holding of the illegal referendum on 16 March and the annexation by Russia. Residents of Crimea who support the unity of Ukraine are intimidated and subject to discrimination. The fundamental freedoms ensured by Ukrainian law are being challenged and minorities live in fear.

Luxembourg remains firmly committed to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, which are basic principles affirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 68/262 of 27 March. Pending the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, we call on the authorities that are controlling Crimea to allow access for international observers, in particular, the United Nations human rights monitoring mission.

The third report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights underscores the practical steps taken by the Ukrainian Government to fulfil its obligations under the joint statement adopted on 17 April in Geneva by Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the European Union. A second crucial step was taken with the presentation of the peace plan and the establishment of a ceasefire.

The international community expects Russia also to send a clear signal of its willingness to achieve a true de-escalation. Apart from increased monitoring of its border and condemnation of violence by armed groups in eastern Ukraine, we call on Russia to continue to withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border and to refrain from a build-up of troops on the border. We also call for the order of the Federation Council authorizing the presence of Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine to be overturned. We note the step that has been taken today in that regard by the President of the Russian Federation.

The election of a President whose legitimacy is unquestionable, the dialogue established between Kyiv and Moscow since the election of President Poroshenko, his announcement of a peace plan and the declaration of a ceasefire are encouraging elements. We hope that they will be a decisive turning point in the search for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. All good will must now be mobilized to take advantage of this opportunity and put an end to a crisis that has already caused too many casualties and suffering among the civilian population in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings.

Recently, some areas in Ukraine have experienced continuous unrest, armed conflict and frequent violence, resulting in heavy tolls on people and property. China is deeply troubled by that situation. Conflict and violence have led to an increase in the internal displacement of persons in Ukraine and a shortage of water, electricity and food. We hope the United Nations and the international human rights and humanitarian agencies will adhere to the principles of neutrality and objectivity in their work.

On the question of Ukraine, I would like to highlight the following points. First, a political solution is the only way to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. We take note of the fact that President Poroshenko announced a peace plan and declared a unilateral ceasefire, and that the armed groups have also declared a ceasefire. China welcomes any efforts that would de-escalate tensions in Ukraine and hopes that all parties will keep calm and exercise restraint, take this opportunity to enhance mutual trust and implement the ceasefire in conflict areas in a practical manner so as to create favourable conditions for a political solution.

Secondly, the crisis in Ukraine has historical roots and a very real complexity. A comprehensive solution of the crisis calls for consideration of the overall situation. The solution should be long-lasting and balanced and take into account the legitimate rights, interests and demands of all regions and people in Ukraine, address the legitimate concerns of all and strike a balance of the interests of all sides.

Thirdly, relevant actors of the international community are actively engaged with each other on the question of Ukraine. That is conducive to addressing the concerns and differences of all parties through peaceful and political means and avoiding conflict and confrontation. Such momentum should be sustained. The Geneva four-party joint diplomatic statement and the road map of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which reflect the wisdom and good will of all sides, should be implemented effectively and comprehensively.

Fourthly, a swift and proper solution of the crisis in Ukraine is not only in the interest of the country and its people but also in the interest of regional peace and stability. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, and we will continue to hold a fair and objective position in actively taking part in the consideration of any proposals and initiatives for the easing of tensions and for finding a political solution. We will play a constructive role in that process.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings.

The Republic of Korea appreciates the dedicated work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and its informative and comprehensive report.

The recent report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission identified a number of worrying human rights concerns in Ukraine, particularly in the eastern region. We note with deep concern that the human rights situation in Donetsk and Lugansk has continued to deteriorate with increased violence and criminal activities by illegal armed groups. We are particularly disheartened to learn that lawlessness and violence, including abductions, arbitrary detentions, torture, harassment and killings are now affecting the broader population of those regions. Moreover, the continuing clashes between the armed groups and the Ukrainian forces exacerbate the situation, resulting in an increased loss of life, further displacement and the destruction of vital infrastructure.

In the light of such a volatile situation, we welcome the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to stop the escalation of violence and seek a peaceful settlement as shown in President Poroshenko's peace plan. We call for the illegal armed groups to reciprocate those efforts and immediately halt all acts of violence and lay down their arms. It is important to ensure the full implementation of the peace plan in order to achieve a sustainable solution to the crisis. In that regard, we welcome the fact that Russian President Putin has expressed support for the peace plan.

At the same time, we reiterate that an inclusive political process is the essential foundation for a stable and democratic future for all Ukrainian people. We encourage the Ukrainian Government, building on the legitimacy of the democratically elected president, to lead comprehensive reform measures that reflect the wishes of all Ukrainians. The protection of all ethnic and linguistic minorities should be a priority in that process.

Finally, we appreciate the ongoing diplomatic efforts towards the stabilization of Ukraine, in particular those of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and

bilateral partners. We encourage all parties to continue such efforts to seek a peaceful political solution.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun and Mr. Ivan Šimonović for their briefings on the situation in Ukraine. Argentina will concentrate specifically on the theme and the focus of today's meeting, namely, to analyse the report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

In that regard, like our colleagues, we are concerned at the deterioration of the situation in the eastern part of Ukraine. The living conditions of the majority of the population, the actions of armed groups, the increasing number of armed persons and weapons, unilateral acts, worsening of violations of human rights and confrontations seem to spreading. Without any doubt we are all aware that those trends have to be dealt with in an urgent manner. The toll in human lives increases with each violent confrontation, and the lives and rights of residents of the affected areas are threatened. We therefore cannot be optimistic but I do believe that we are facing a scenario in which there is awareness that priority must be given to having an open dialogue and finding a political solution to this crisis.

However, we cannot ignore the violations of human rights described in the report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The killing, torture, kidnapping, harassment, illegal detention and intimidation are unjustified. All allegations should be investigated and those responsible should be brought to justice. All the necessary measures must be taken to protect all the human rights of everyone in Ukraine and to ensure their full enjoyment, irrespective of ethnicity, language, cultural group, religion or the region of the country in which they live.

We have taken note and understood how the increase in violence impacts those living in the areas affected by the confrontations. It was therefore clear that a direct consequence of that would be an increase in displaced persons and in the number of people to leave the region — for example, from Donetsk — access to water in Slovyansk and other areas in the Donetsk region having been limited, along with limited access to health services and a lack of electricity and gas, as well as problems with the availability of food and medical supplies. All of that has served not just to subject the population to difficult living conditions; I wish to repeat that it demands a positive attitude to finding a solution to the crisis.

I will conclude my observations by mentioning the 15 points set out by the Government of Ukraine, which I appreciate. It is also very important, in particular with regard to points 14 and 15 of the plan, that discussions also take on board not just the talks between the State and the regions, armed groups and various minorities, but also the behaviour of the market. I say that because, in listening to Mr. Šimonović say that there is an extreme humanitarian crisis that is creating great suffering for a huge segment of the population, we also see in the document that has been circulated to us that the cost of food has increased dramatically, with some seasonal vegetables being four or five times more expensive than in the past.

We know that during crises, whether they be security, political, economic or social, some unscrupulous market players, who do not sit with us here to reconcile our differences — we do not even know where they are — well know how to speculate when it comes to the cost of food. No Valerie Amos can hold back, and no Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance can be up to the task, if we remain indifferent to such actions, which are ethically reprehensible. We should discuss that in the forum where it should be discussed: the organs of the United Nations.

We believe it is necessary to take every measure to address the situation effectively, while ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it, including in the areas that are still outside of Government control, and facilitating the conditions for the civilians who wish to leave the areas affected by the conflict to be able to do so.

Finally, I should like to make the following brief points. Argentina insists on the need to redouble efforts on the part of all stakeholders to demonstrate political will and the belief that the only acceptable way forward is through dialogue and that resorting to violence is not an option.

Secondly, Argentina will support any initiative that might genuinely contribute to putting an end to the violence and providing a space for constructive negotiations and reaching a political compromise among the parties.

Thirdly, the measures agreed in Geneva and the road map of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) continue to be a road map, the effective implementation of which by all

parties will allow us to de-escalate the situation and move forward in a process of national dialogue that generates trust among the various communities and provides assurance for all Ukrainians that their main demands will be heard and their rights respected.

Fourthly, we are pleased with the efforts being made by the democratically elected Ukrainian Government for a peaceful settlement to the country's situation and with the steps taken by the Russian authorities to the same end.

Fifthly, it is vital to combat the hate speech, discrimination, hostility and violence. Argentina reaffirms its respect for, defence of and belief that the international community and all its Member States must act within the framework of respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Along with the representative of Nigeria, we too hope that the rebels' promise to release the OSCE detainees will come to pass. In that connection, we have asked many times that they be released unconditionally and without delay.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General of Department for Political Affairs, and Mr. Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, for their briefings.

The report on Ukraine issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights covering the period 7 May to 7 June, unfortunately confirms the worsening of the human rights situation in that country, in particular in the south-east. Chad notes with concern that well-trained and -equipped armed groups are gaining strength and continue to occupy the majority of public and administrative buildings in many cities and communities, in particular in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. We also note an increase in the number of kidnappings, detentions, ill treatment, torture, killings and even summary executions by armed groups. The attacks of those groups are no longer just targeting journalists, elected or local officials or civil society activists, but are directly impacting civilians.

We condemn the abduction and detention of eight monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and we demand their immediate and unconditional release.

As the fighting intensifies, civilians are increasingly caught in the crossfire between the armed groups and the Ukrainian military. That results in a growing number of civilians killed and wounded, in particular women and children. Chad calls on all the parties involved to act with calm and restraint and urges countries with influence on them to help them make dialogue and reconciliation between Ukrainians a priority.

Given the environment of insecurity related to social and economic hardship, civilians are fleeing the areas of conflict. There are already more than 15,000 internally displaced persons, 64 per cent of whom are women and children, in particular in the east. Chad calls upon those involved in the fighting to facilitate access for humanitarian organizations to areas affected by military operations so that people's needs may be evaluated and taken into account.

The crisis in Ukraine is an ongoing threat to the freedom of expression. Many journalists have been killed, kidnapped, tortured or prosecuted. Hate speech on social networks continues to fuel tensions and widen the divisions between communities. In that regard, Chad calls upon all stakeholders to refrain from spreading messages of intolerance that incite discrimination, hatred or violence.

In spite of the bleak human rights situation in Ukraine, Chad is pleased with the new Government's efforts to restore public order, re-establish political dialogue and stabilize the country. In upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, Chad supports and encourages the implementation of the plan to peaceably resolve the situation, led by President Petro Poroshenko, and in particular the Government's unilateral decision to institute a ceasefire in the east of Ukraine from 20 to 27 June.

We also welcome the Ukrainian Parliament's vote on the resolution on the memorandum of understanding and peace that provides for a package of constitutional reforms of areas that include the decentralization of power, special status for the Russian language, reform of the judicial and police systems and enactment of an amnesty for participants in the anti-Government demonstrations in the East who agree to lay down their arms. Chad urges that the judiciary in Ukraine guarantee the victims' rights and commits to investigating those responsible for violating human rights, including the perpetrators of the events linked to the Maidan Square demonstrations, the murders that took place in January and February and the incidents on 2 May in Odesa.

In our view, the underlying causes of the crisis in Ukraine are structural ones, and if the country is to emerge from crisis its solutions must include those that take those realities into account. If they are to succeed, reconciliation and development among the country's communities must be achieved by peaceful and democratic means, with respect and guarantees for human rights for all. In order to deal with these challenges and to those linked to its territorial integrity, sovereignty and stability, Ukraine needs the support of the entire international community.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Ivan Šimonović and Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for their briefings. President Poroshenko's peace plan offers a fragile hope for a solution to this artificially induced crisis, which has been stoked by Russia's persistent anti-Ukrainian propaganda as well as a continuous influx of militants and weaponry from across Ukraine's Russian borders. A return to normality is badly needed after the months of destruction and lawlessness perpetrated by illegal armed separatists, which have led to a disturbing deterioration of human rights and the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine, as the third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission testifies.

The report is yet more proof that a pro-Russian militant insurgency has been the cause, and not the effect, of the serious human rights violations and a breakdown of law and order in the eastern regions of Ukraine, just as Russia's occupation of Crimea was the cause, and not the effect, of serious human and minority rights violations in that region. The report details cases of abductions, unlawful detentions, killings, torture, ill-treatment, forced disappearances, intimidation and harassment perpetrated by the armed separatists in eastern Ukraine. Criminality and looting have increased considerably in areas held by the militant separatists. Stalinist-style arbitrary executions by the insurgents have also been recorded, including within their own ranks or as revenge on those giving support to Government forces. One such case mentioned in the report is the execution of a farmer in front of his family for bringing food to Ukrainian forces.

The separatists have been carrying out increasingly brazen attacks using ever more sophisticated weapons. They possess anti-aircraft and anti-tank weaponry, automatic assault rifles, man-portable air defence systems and other arms. Last week, three T-64 tanks, BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launchers and other military vehicles crossed illegally from Russia into Ukrainian territory and were seen in the towns of Snizhne, Torez and Makiyivka. On 14 June, in a criminal act they readily admitted to, militants downed a Ukrainian military transport plane, leading to 49 deaths. Only a few minutes ago, while we were speaking in the Council, a military helicopter was again downed by the separatists, resulting in nine more deaths. We offer our sympathy to all those who have lost their loved ones and have been affected by the displacement, deprivation, intimidation and threats produced by this crisis.

We reiterate our long-standing position that Ukraine has a right and a duty to defend itself and to seek to restore law and order within its borders. Legitimate force must be used with due restraint, avoiding unnecessary damage to civilian infrastructure and civilian casualties. The best way to defeat the deadly mix of violence, hate and lawlessness that drives the pro-Russian insurgency is by upholding legality and the rule of law.

Mr. Šimonović's third report contains a number of recommendations to the Ukrainian Government. Lithuania and all the members of the European Union stand ready to assist Ukraine in reforming the security sector, the police and the rule of law. We welcome the steps that the Government of Ukraine has taken so far in implementing the 17 April Geneva statement, through a number of round tables, initiatives and legislative changes, including those aimed at decentralizing power. Other important legislative measures are in the process of being enacted, and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović spoke about that at length. The Ukrainian Government has repeatedly offered to grant amnesty to those who lay down their arms. Just a few days ago, President Poroshenko went to eastern Ukraine to directly engage with the local population and authorities.

Welcome steps have also been taken to ensure the rights of ethnic minorities. In stark contrast to the situation in occupied Crimea, where the teaching of the Ukrainian and Tatar languages is being squeezed out, on 30 May Kyiv amended the framework curriculum to improve the teaching of minority languages as diverse as Armenian, Bulgarian, Tatar, Gagauz, Greek, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Korean, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Slovak.

President Poroshenko's most recent initiative, a 15-step plan for a peaceful settlement of the situation

in eastern Ukraine, which my country fully endorses, could be a real game-changer. While it was unfortunately greeted by more insurgent attacks, trilateral talks are taking place, and there has been some movement on exchanging prisoners and restoring public utility services.

The Ukrainian Government is doing its part to realize the peace agreement. The onus is now on the separatists and on Russia to do theirs. We note the fact that on Wednesday Russia's Federation Council is to revoke a resolution authorizing the use of Russian armed forces on Ukrainian territory, and we hope that implies all of Ukrainian territory. More, however, must be done. Russia has yet to clearly dissociate itself from the militant separatism in eastern Ukraine or to call on all the insurgents to lay down the arms. It has not yet ensured proper control of its borders with Ukraine or put an end to the flow into eastern Ukraine of Russian-made weaponry and mercenaries, as well as foreign fighters.

Importantly, Russia has yet to end the incendiary campaign against Ukraine that has been stoking militant insurgency in the eastern part of the country. Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable and must be respected by all. We reiterate our condemnation of the occupation of Crimea and stress that a forced redrawing of internationally recognized borders has no place in the twenty-first century.

Lithuania appreciates the work being done by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission and the special monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to provide regular updates on the situation in Ukraine. We welcome the Ukrainian Government's invitation to allow the extension of the United Nations mission for three more months. As noted by previous speakers, impartial reporting on human rights violations and developments on the ground is key to ensuring that facts are not manipulated.

Ukraine's continued openness to international monitoring shows its constructive spirit and stands in stark contrast to the actions of the separatists, who have done all they can to prevent reporting from the areas they hold captive. Let us not forget that they are still holding eight OSCE observers. We call for their immediate release and that of all the hostages in separatist hands. The Ukrainian peace plan offers a potential breakthrough for the restoration of peace and stability in line with the international principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. We hope that all the parties will seize this opportunity, although the events of a few minutes ago raise legitimate doubts as to the separatists' commitment to it.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank Assistant Secretaries-General Zerihoun and Šimonović for their briefings this morning.

Australia welcomes President Poroshenko's peace plan as a major opportunity for de-escalating the situation in Ukraine. We also welcome Ukraine's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire and the apparent support for it from separatist leaders. The peace plan, with its call for dialogue with legally elected authorities in the east, security guarantees for all parties who participate in negotiations, the release of hostages and further efforts to decentralize power, including through local elections, presents a welcome chance for addressing grievances and ending the crisis. Those are courageous initiatives and should have our support.

We urge separatists in eastern Ukraine to adhere to — and not take advantage of — the ceasefire. Reports of separatist attacks against Ukrainian border posts after the ceasefire's declaration must be condemned. Reports received in the last half an hour of a Ukrainian helicopter being shot down near Slovyansk, with nine dead, are a very bad development. Commitments to adhere to the ceasefire must be upheld. Australia understands that Ukraine's armed forces will use force to defend themselves if attacked. They have the right to do so. Of course, the Ukrainian Government must continue to ensure that any operations conducted by its armed forces are in line with international standards.

There are disturbing reports of the continued flow of illegal fighters, arms and other military equipment, including heavy weapons such as tanks, across the Russian border into Ukraine. The Council should not tolerate those continued and destabilizing violations of Ukraine's sovereignty. It is essential that Russia exercise control of its borders. We are also concerned by reports that Russia has again redeployed thousands of troops near the Ukrainian border in what appears to be a further calculated provocation. All those actions have been destabilizing eastern Ukraine. We again urge Russia to pull its troops back from the border, prevent the flow of illegal arms and fighters into Ukraine and call publicly for separatists in Ukraine to renounce violence.

More positively, we welcome President Putin's request to the Russian Duma today to repeal the resolution that purported to sanction Russia's use of force in Ukraine. No such use of force is legal or legitimate, but, if carried out, Putin's move to repeal it constitutes at least a signal of movement towards de-escalation. We also welcome the Secretary-General's continued engagement with the situation and the United Nations commitment to work with Ukrainian authorities to assist with internally displaced persons.

The third report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine presents a damning picture of the consequences of violent separatism in eastern Ukraine. The majority of human rights abuses are occurring in Donetsk and Luhansk, where separatist groups are active. In other areas of Ukraine, under Government control, concerted efforts are being made to ensure human rights are respected. The report commends Ukraine's own efforts to address grievances and build a society that respects the rule of law.

Ukraine has addressed constitutional reform, with a focus on the decentralization of power; announced parliamentary elections for later this year; worked to reform law enforcement bodies and taken steps to fight corruption. Ukrainian authorities have begun to investigate the Maidan protests and the 2 May Odesa incident. Timely accountability is crucial, so it is important that those investigations progress quickly.

In contrast to those positive steps, the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to deteriorate. The aggressive actions of separatist groups are having a negative impact on the human rights situation in areas of Ukraine under their control. As the report states, "with the demise of security, the rule of law and governance, the protection gap is widening". Civilians have been killed by armed groups. Abductions and detentions now affect the broader population in Donetsk and Luhansk, who live in a climate of fear and intimidation. We are affronted at the ongoing detention of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitors in eastern Ukraine, and we call again for their immediate release. Journalists in eastern Ukraine face attacks, abductions and detentions. Five have been killed during the crisis. We welcome the Council's press statement on the killing of journalists in eastern Ukraine. In a situation where misinformation abounds, it is critical that journalists be able to report freely and without fear.

Violence in the east, as we know, has disrupted social services. Schools have closed, hospitals are overcrowded and understaffed, running water and electricity are scarce in some areas, and food prices have increased rapidly. It is clearly increasingly difficult for civilians in eastern Ukraine to lead normal lives, but we note also the United Nations assessment that the situation in eastern Ukraine, unacceptable as it is, does not constitute a humanitarian crisis. The risk, of course, is that it could worsen and become a humanitarian crisis if armed separatists do not desist and if Russian assistance to them does not stop.

I should note that the human rights situation in Crimea has deteriorated markedly since Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula. Freedom of assembly and religious belief are under threat. There are reports that some Crimean residents have been forced to surrender their Ukrainian citizenship. It is disturbing that only a small number of Crimeans were able to vote in Ukraine's presidential elections and had to do so by travelling to mainland Ukraine.

The report makes useful proposals for the way ahead, which deserve our support. Crucially, it emphasizes that all armed groups must immediately put an end to their violent activities and lay down their arms. President Poroshenko's peace plan and ceasefire provide the opportunity to do that — to end separatist violence — and all parties should seize this opportunity. A failure to resolve the situation by peaceful means will destroy the lives and livelihoods of even more Ukrainians. None of us in the Council should allow that to happen.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the briefings by Assistant Secretaries-General Šimonović and Zerihoun and express our appreciation for the efforts that the Secretary-General continues to make to bring the situation in Ukraine to an end.

The recent report of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine continues to generate concern for our country with respect to the human rights situation in eastern and southern Ukraine, in particular in Donetsk and Luhansk. My delegation is particularly concerned by the alarming increase in human rights violations and abuses, which have primarily affected journalists, politicians and activists. We deeply deplore the deaths of two Russian journalists and an Italian journalist in Luhansk last week.

The increase in violations of the right to life, liberty and security that now affect civilians in those regions, as manifested in the attacks, kidnappings,

torture and harassment taking place, highlight the need to restore the rule of law and respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 68/262 and international law. We also reiterate our concern about the situation of internally displaced persons in Ukraine, which, according to the report, now total over 12,700 people, primarily women and children. That is a clear sign of the severity of the crisis.

Chile would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to put an end to the situation in the country and highlights the peace plan and the unilateral ceasefire recently announced by President Poroshenko. The announcement by separatist groups that they would comply with the ceasefire is an encouraging sign and should be reflected in their actions on the ground. Of equal importance are the proposed constitutional amendments in the Memorandum of concord and peace, which was drafted during the round table on national unity and adopted on 20 May by the Ukrainian Parliament, which are aimed at determining Ukraine's future in a democratic, transparent and inclusive manner.

We urge the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis through direct political dialogue, exercise restraint, refrain from unilateral actions that could exacerbate tensions and participate in international mediation efforts such as the trilateral contact group, which includes Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Geneva agreement of 17 April. Similarly, we call for full respect for the rule of law, democracy and human rights in Ukraine, including the rights of all minorities.

The Government of Ukraine has the responsibility to maintain public order throughout the territory, in conformity with its constitutional norms and domestic legislation and with full respect for the rights and safeguards of all people in Ukraine. The monopoly of the use of force that the Government of Ukraine enjoys in its own territory, as is the case for any Government in the international community, should be exercised with full respect for human rights and in proportion to the situation at hand.

Chile reiterates its support for the appeal made by Mr. Šimonović for ensuring accountability with regard to violations and abuses of human rights in Ukraine, including the 222 cases of illegal detention, of the disappearance of 81 persons, and the deaths of more than 400 people in the east, including children, members of the armed forces and armed groups. It is equally essential that the authorities continue to investigate and finally bring to justice those who were responsible for the death of 48 persons in Odesa on 2 May, and that they look into why the security forces did not take more timely and decisive steps to prevent that tragedy.

We reiterate our support for the work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and with the monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We are confident that those independent international mechanisms will continue to contribute to achieving a solution to the crisis.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Mr. President, I thank you for convening this meeting. Let me also thank Assistant Secretaries-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun and Ivan Šimonović for their respective briefings on the political and human rights situations in Ukraine. We commend the Secretary-General for his good offices and for his unwavering efforts to find a lasting political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

As we meet today, we are encouraged by several steps taken by the parties in the region to de-escalate the situation. Rwanda supports the 15-step plan of President Petro Poroshenko to end the crisis and welcomes the unilateral ceasefire he announced on Friday, 20 June. We hope that the plan will serve as a stepping stone for all parties involved to commit to finding a long-term peaceful solution to the crisis and the suffering of Ukrainians. In that regard, we welcome the decisions by the separatist groups to observe a ceasefire until Friday, 27 June. We see these parallel ceasefires as providing new momentum for the political talks in the framework of the peace plan presented by President Poroshenko. At the same time, we commend today's decision of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation to request the Federation Council to revoke his right to use force in eastern Ukraine, as well as for his call on all parties to the Ukrainian conflict to cease hostilities and sit down at the negotiating table.

Despite the aforementioned possible developments, we are concerned at the alarming level of escalation, particularly criminal activities and reports of serious human rights violations. We condemn the continuing abductions, detentions, acts of ill treatment and torture, arbitrary arrests and sexual harassment. The reported cases of forced disappearances are extremely worrying. We urge the United Nations human rights monitoring

mission in Ukraine and the National Preventive Mechanism, in cooperation with the Ombudsperson, to continue their efforts to ensure that human rights of those who remain detained are upheld.

We further call for the immediate release of the monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, held captive since 26 and 29 May. The reported increase in the number of internally displaced persons is also concerning, but even more so are the reports of limited access to humanitarian actors, who are unable to reach the internally displaced persons in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. We urge all actors to ensure that those in need have access to humanitarian support. We equally urge the Government of Ukraine to establish a corridor for the safe passage of civilians and to provide the necessary security. The consequences of the violence in southern and eastern Ukraine have impacted the already dire economic situation, with a poverty rate of 24.7 per cent in youth unemployment and a lack of access to medical services. The delivery of medication and other necessities has been challenging as a result of instability.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Council needs to unite and rally behind the people of Ukraine. We must show them that we are committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to our own responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Let me reiterate our call on the armed groups to disarm and adhere to the ceasefire, engage in constructive dialogue, and support the ongoing efforts to de-escalate the crisis.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Šimonović and Mr. Zerihoun for their briefings this morning. We have taken note of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the third report, dated 15 June, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, based on the findings of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine.

My delegation expresses its deep concern over the worsening situation in eastern Ukraine, and particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk, following the proliferation of weapons and a rise in the number of armed elements, which have in turn increased the number of kidnappings, incidents of forced detention and torture, and crime in that region. It has also led to a rise in the number of messages of hatred and media propaganda campaigns fabricated by those groups.

Jordan therefore reiterates its condemnation of all those acts, as well as its invitation to all those with influence in Ukraine to strive to de-escalate the situation and to reach a solution that can re-establish stability in eastern Ukraine and thereby guarantee the return of internally displaced persons to their homes and to avert a negative socioeconomic impact in Ukraine.

Jordan welcomes the progress achieved by the Ukrainian Government in implementing the recommendations contained in the two previous reports. We appeal to the Government to continue to accelerate its efforts in order to implement all the recommendations contained in the last report. We also welcome the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to implementing the points of the Geneva statement of 17 April. We reiterate the need to respect international norms in all operations that may be launched to re-establish the State's authority throughout Ukrainian territory.

The democratic election of a new President in Ukraine last month represents a ray of hope for the Ukrainian people. Jordan pays tribute to the steps that President Poroshenko is beginning to take in order to ensure a return to stability in his country, starting with the visit he made to the regions of the east of Ukraine and his proposal for a peace plan that would put an end to the revolt in the east. The President has also proposed a general amnesty to separatists who elect to surrender their weapons, as well as to open safe corridors so that they can leave Ukraine. He is also continuing to work to promote the rights of minorities and communities that are not Ukrainian speakers. Those are all signs of good will on the part of the Ukrainian authorities that enhance the chances of achieving a peaceful solution to the crisis.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community and the United Nations to combine their efforts to ensure the success of the peace plan and to continue with mediation and good offices in order to end the crisis and bring about a return to stability in Ukraine.

The President (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

I must note first and foremost that, yet again, during today's discussions some members of the Security Council did not attempt to objectively evaluate the situation in Ukraine and its root causes. They

made insinuations and even threats against Russia. We categorically refute them, and let us get to the heart of the matter now.

For the first time in Ukraine, fragile encouraging signs have begun to appear. That President Poroshenko has declared a ceasefire is certainly important; there can be no negotiations without one. Most important, however, is that the ceasefire should lead to dialogue among all the warring parties in order to reach a compromise acceptable to all, so that people living in south-east Ukraine feel without a doubt that they are an integral part of the country, with all the rights of citizens of that State, and that those rights are guaranteed, including by the Constitution.

We value the first consultations that were held in Donetsk between the authorities and official leaders of Ukraine and militias of south-east Ukraine, with the participation of the Russian Ambassador to Ukraine and the representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We expect that the agreement to support the ceasefire will be strictly adhered to by the parties.

Dialogue has begun, although the so-called Poroshenko plan did not originally include negotiations. Not surprisingly, the representatives of the east embraced him warily. They have no basis for trusting the Kyiv authorities. For our part, we are convinced that, without practical action and direct negotiations, the peace plan process will not be viable or realistic.

In order to normalize and resolve the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, as well as with regard to the trilateral talks already launched on that matter, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a letter to the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly concerning the revocation of the Council's decision on the use of the Russian Army on the territory of Ukraine, dated 1 March.

From the outset, Russia has called for a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine through inclusive dialogue and swift constitutional reform. That was the goal of the Geneva statement of 17 April, as well as of the OSCE road map, which had our support along with that of many other States, but for some reason not that of Ukraine. We have repeatedly called for the relevant documents to be adopted by the Security Council, from short statements in support of the Geneva statement to resolutions that stress the importance of inclusive dialogue in resolving the humanitarian issues. Unfortunately, our initiatives are invariably met with stonewalling by Western colleagues.

That may be because Kyiv did not adhere to many of the provisions of that document, even though they had made a commitment to refrain from violence, intimidation and provocation. Instead of halting its punitive operations against its own people, Kyiv actually intensified them.

Kyiv has not moved to disarm illegally armed groups, particularly the co-called Right Sector and other extremists, along with various regional militias such as the Dnepr and Azov and the legally dubious National Guard.

The Ukrainian crisis is strongly coloured by the fact that it is a direct consequence of the violent and unconstitutional change of Government in February. Residents of the south-east were treated with contempt by the self-proclaimed authorities. They copied the tactics of the Maidan and took up arms in order to declare their legal grievances, but then they were declared separatists and terrorists, and punitive operations were launched against entire cities with the use of heavy artillery and aviation. For a long time, even against the backdrop of President Poroshenko's peace promises, those operations only gathered momentum, in both intensity and scope.

Furthermore, the ceasefire was constantly violated. Shelling even reached Russian territory, as a result of which people were wounded and buildings were destroyed in the neighbourhood of the Dolzhansky Novoshahtinsk crossing point. The humanitarian situation remains extremely difficult, with an unabated flow of refugees to Russia. We are trubled by the refusal of the Ukrainian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to cooperate with us in that area. We call for the removal of artificial obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian supplies and for the establishment of safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians from combat zones. The corridors promised by President Poroshenko have yet to be created.

Even under bullets, refugees continue to leave Ukraine. Upwards of 450,000 Ukrainian citizens have crossed the border and remain in Russia. The majority are living with friends and family, but in the border regions alone there are more than 220 temporary shelters, including tent cities. There are currently more than 19,000 people living in such accommodation, including more than 5,500 children. However, it is

difficult for the central and southern districts to absorb such an influx, and new welcome centres are being established across Russia. Across the country, people are collecting humanitarian aid for the residents of south-east Ukraine. I will not hide the fact that we are deeply disturbed that some of our colleagues on the Council who are so prone to play the humanitarian card when they find it politically expedient seem indifferent in this case.

With respect to the latest report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Ukraine, there is actually no reason for the Council to be discussing the report. The monitoring mission was established by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the invitation of the Ukrainian authorities. Since the Security Council did not provide instructions for the report, logic would dictate that the report not be submitted to the Council.

However, it is surprising that Kyiv, which itself invited the mission, is refusing to cooperate with it, particularly with respect to the investigation of the tragedy in Odesa. The report notes the lack of progress in OSCE's parallel investigations, now numbering six, which simply shows the efforts being made to drown the truth in paper, and confirms the need for a comprehensive international investigation into the Odesa tragedy, as we have stated from the outset. As for the Russian Federation, we did not invite the mission and made no recommendations to it. We view the inclusion of the recommendations in the document as inappropriate.

The human rights situation in Crimea should clearly not be the subject of the report. We also believe that the mission's inability to provide an assessment under the pretext of a lack of access is nonsense. The consequences of Kyiv's action to cut off water in Crimea are not mentioned in the report. However, the lack of access did not prevent the mission from making politically abhorrent statements on the deteriorating situation in Crimea. There are several politically motivated references in the report. According to the guidelines for drafting the report, it seems that only verified information should be used. That is probably correct but that limitation has always benefited Kyiv in the report.

There are a number of references in the document to so-called reports of alleged human rights violations by armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. However, why are many details overlooked with regard to the residents of the area and journalists, as well as videos showing artillery strikes on residential areas in southeastern towns and casualties among civilians as a result of the indiscriminate use of force by the Government? The entire world saw the pictures of the Ukrainian air strikes on the Luhansk administrative building on 2 June, which could in no way be called a military target. Civilians were killed. Despite the fact that colleagues of the OSCE observers underscored that the strikes were carried out by surface-to-air rockets, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for some reason makes the absurd assumption that it was an unsuccessful attempt by militia to shoot down a Ukrainian plane. Such a statement has been rebutted by numerous sources.

In the section on propaganda, the report overlooks the United Nations helicopter incident. For some reason the incident is not mentioned. However, in order to deal with the situation on the ground, we will have to determine the position with regard to the helicopters that had previously been provided to Ukraine for United Nations operations and if they had really been repainted. That should have been included and the relevant United Nations resources provided to that end.

A separate discussion on the situation of journalists is required. The report notes that on 24 May, an Italian photojournalist, Andrea Rocchelli, and his colleague, Andrey Mironov, were killed. On 17 June, following mortar fire, the Russian journalists Igor Kornelyuk and Anton Voloshin were killed in Luhansk. There needs to be a careful investigation of those events. There are too many reports that indicate that it was a targeted attack.

The detention, intimidation and beating of journalists continue. In addition to the cases in the report, we would note the 14 June incident, in which two correspondents of the Zvezda television channel were brutally beaten by the Ukrainian armed forces in order to obtain confessions. The Ukrainian authorities then boasted that the journalists had apologized for the reporting. There are continuing reports of journalists being persecuted for carrying out their work, as well as their expulsion from the country. In general, we must say that the report undermines trust in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and gives rise to serious questions as to whether it is appropriate for the mission to continue its work.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): It is of great importance that the Security Council is having a meeting on the current situation in Ukraine. I would like to thank all members of the Security Council for their statements. I am grateful for their support of our President's plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in eastern Ukraine.

We thank Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for his briefing. We welcome the report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, presented by Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Šimonović, who has travelled to Ukraine many times. The report contains conclusions and recommendations that are important to the Government of Ukraine and highly valuable to our country. Ukraine is ready to further develop and deepen cooperation with the United Nations human rights bodies. We welcome the decision to extend the United Nations human rights monitoring mission mandate for another term.

The report notes the continuation of the worrying trends in Crimea, including instances of enforced disappearances, detentions, violence and ill treatment by illegal paramilitary groups, or the so-called Crimean self-defence, often targeting journalists, human rights defenders and political opponents. It also notes impunity for human rights violations. The judicial system remains practically paralysed. Crimean residents face serious difficulties in exercising their civil and political rights. Following threats, many Crimeans have been forced to give up Ukrainian citizenship. There are only two Ukrainian schools in Crimea, one of which has already been compelled to become Russian and its director forced to resign. Today, we learned that unknown armed men have occupied a madrasa, or Muslim religious school, near Simferopol.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the officially confirmed number of internally displaced persons from Crimea, Ukraine, is more than 12,000, who have been forced to leave the peninsula due to the unbearable living conditions created by the occupying authorities. That is truly alarming. We demand that the Russian Federation, which has temporarily occupied the Crimean peninsula, ensure the protection of the rights of Ukrainian citizens of all nationalities who remain in Crimea, that is, Ukrainians, Russians, Crimean Tatars and others, including their right to freedom and to security and the rights of religious communities.

Given the ongoing systematic violations of human rights in Crimea, the Ukrainian side hopes that the situation on the peninsula shall continue to receive the attention of the international community. It supports the report's call on the occupying authorities in the Crimea to provide access for independent international experts, primarily the United Nations monitoring mission.

The report, inter alia, contains updates on the information regarding the tragic events in Odesa. It is significant that the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to investigate both the tragic Maidan events and those of 2 May in Odesa have been acknowledged in the report. The assistance that the law enforcement bodies provided to the mission and their observance of the proper respect for the rights of those arrested in Odesa are noted with appreciation. We thank the human rights monitoring group for the objective approach to the assessment of the events. As of the present moment, several suspects have been arrested. State criminal experts were able to establish the cause of death of the victims. The investigation continues and the official results will be made public as soon as they have been established.

In the report, special attention is paid to the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine. The document notes the growing number of illegal actions committed by highly organized illegal armed groups in violation of national and international laws. It is very important to mention that human rights violations and humanitarian problems occur only in those cities that are temporarily under the control of illegal armed groups, such as Slovyansk, Kramatorsk and Snizhne. The illegal activities of those groups include murder, torture, the seizure of administrative and public buildings, the kidnapping and detention of civilians, including journalists, taking hostages, including observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and intimidating and terrorizing the local population. The groups are capturing infrastructure management buildings, causing disruption to the operation of some water and electricity supply facilities that have suffered gunfire. Terrorists are deliberately waging a war against civilians, creating barriers to the free movement of people, including disabled persons. Such people are cynically used as live shields. We express our deepest condolences over the deaths of the foreign

journalists, Italian and Russian, who became victims of the fighting.

From the very beginning, I would like to stress that there is no humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The humanitarian problems in some parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are caused only by the activities of pro-Russian illegal armed groups that have managed to seize control of the cities. On the other hand, the Ukrainian Government is doing its utmost to exercise control over the situation, to restore law and order and to provide help for all our citizens. The President of Ukraine ordered the establishment of all necessary conditions for the civilian population willing to leave cities temporarily seized by terrorists through safe corridors.

The State emergency services were assigned to establish a multifunctional coordination centre in order to transport affected persons, as well as to maintain the health-care and social needs of the civilians. The local authorities of other regions of Ukraine ensure the accommodation of people arriving from the area who have suffered terrorist attacks. The National Coordination Centre is assisting in the temporary accommodation of the citizens of Ukraine who are moving from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to other regions of the country. Special attention has been given to the relocation of children who are being sent to and accommodated at summer camps in all regions of the country.

The Ukrainian Government is demonstrating its ability to bring peace to people. The authorities of liberated cities like Mariupol and others are now able to deliver the message of peace to other cities, whose populations are still influenced by false messages containing anti-Ukrainian propaganda. As a practical step, the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, held a large, inclusive meeting-dialogue last week with the true representatives of the eastern region of the country — representatives of local communities and of the business and political elite of Donetsk and Luhansk and legitimately elected mayors.

In his inaugural speech on 7 June, President Poroshenko stressed that he was assuming the office in order to preserve the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Ukraine, ensure sustainable peace and guarantee security for all citizens. Last Friday, President Poroshenko presented his plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, which I assume the Security Council supports. Council members will have noticed that the plan includes three major parts: ceasefire, restoration and dialogue.

President Poroshenko has already initiated the implementation of the plan by ordering a unilateral ceasefire in the east of Ukraine. I would now like to quote from the speech with which my President addressed the nation last Sunday and in which he explained the details of the plan.

> "The immediate implementation of the peace plan will open the path to political dialogue. I invite legally elected representatives of local Government, non-governmental organizations and everyone else to join in the dialogue. Diametrically opposed views will not be a barrier to participation in the negotiations. I am ready to talk with those who have erred or who mistakenly took a position in support of separatism, but not, of course, people who were involved in acts of terrorism, murder or torture. Moreover, I guarantee safety for all participants in the negotiations, for anyone who wants to speak the language of argument instead of the language of weapons.
>
> "It is important to state that the issue of the territorial integrity of Ukraine is not on the table. We hear and take into account the specific opinions of Donbas citizens, but we cannot and will not transform Ukraine, where there is a large consensus on the issues of unity, territorial structure, language and geopolitical orientation, to satisfy them.
>
> "What then is the way out of this situation? It is in a broad decentralization of power. Decentralization provides for the expansion of the rights of regions on issues of historical memory, cultural traditions and language policy. Those issues will never again divide the country. Local communities in Donbas will have the right to freely use the Russian language along with the State language."

The plan has been supported by major world leaders and international organizations — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. Ukraine is committed to strictly following a path of building peace. In response to the peace-restoring initiative, the gunmen and terrorists launched continued armed attacks, blatantly violating the truce terms.

We welcome the intention of the Russian President to cancel of Federation Council decision on the use of

armed forces on the territory of Ukraine. However, in areas of the Russian Federation adjacent to the border with Ukraine, a notable increase in the concentration of manpower and military equipment of the Russian Federation's armed forces has been witnessed in recent days.

Ukraine calls on all international partners to support our sustained efforts to restore peace and the unconditional implementation by all sides of the 17 April Geneva statement. We have asked the international community to support President Poroshenko's plan for the peaceful settlement of the situation in the eastern part of Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.